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First, Felsenthal does not teach engaging a transport positioning feature of a substrate pallet with a transport alignment feature of a transport mechanism to particularly position the substrate pallet with respect to the transport mechanism, as recited by claim 1. Second, Felsenthal does not teach engaging a processes alignment feature of the substrate pallet with a process chamber alignment feature located within the process chamber to particularly position the substrate processing pallet with respect to the process chamber, as recited by claim 1. In particular, Felsenthal does not teach: a transport positioning feature of a substrate pallet; a transport alignment feature of a transport mechanism, which engages with the transport positioning feature; a processes alignment feature of the pallet; and a process chamber alignment feature, which engages with the processes alignment feature, as recited by claim 1.

Felsenthal does not teach a transport positioning feature nor a processes alignment feature of a pallet, as recited by claim 1, because Felsenthal is not directed to features that particularly position a pallet with respect to a transport mechanism and with respect to a process chamber. Felsenthal discloses only one example of a pallet (15), and teaches that " substrates (14) may be supported by a pallet (15) or any type of substrate carrier known in the art." See Felsenthal, column 4, lines 50-51 and 55-56. Felsenthal, however, is silent regarding pallet alignment features, as recited by claim 1.

The Specification of Felsenthal includes only two additional comments regarding pallets:

Batch processing systems process an entire batch of substrate [sic] simultaneously. Substrates are either loaded in the process chamber one-by-one or they are loaded onto a pallet, which is then loaded into the process chamber. See Felsenthal, column 1, lines 63-66.

"[T]he present invention features an apparatus for simultaneously transporting and processing substrates.... The substrates may be positioned on a pallet or free standing. See Felsenthal, column 2, lines 48-51.

Thus, Felsenthal teaches that substrates can be loaded into an in-line process system with or without use of a pallet (15), but the Specification of Felsenthal does not describe pallet alignment features, as recited by claim 1.

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Moreover, no figure in Felsenthal illustrates alignment features, as recited by claim 1. The sole representation of a pallet illustrates no such alignment features. See Felsenthal, FIG. 2.

For the above reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that Felsenthal does not teach engaging a transport positioning feature of a substrate pallet with a transport alignment feature of a transport mechanism, and engaging a processes alignment feature of the substrate pallet with a process chamber alignment feature located within the process chamber, as recited by claim 1. Therefore, independent claim 1 is neither disclosed nor suggested by Felsenthal. Because claim 1 is patentable over Felsenthal, Applicants submit that claims 2-9, which depend directly or indirectly from claim 1, are patentable as well.

Objection to Claims 10-17

The Office action objected to claims 10-17 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. In view of the above comments regarding claim 1, from which claims 10-17 depend, Applicants respectfully request that the objection to claims 10-17 be withdrawn.

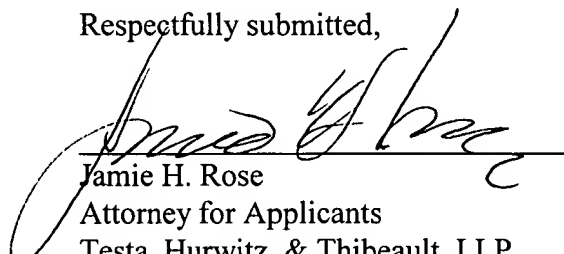
CONCLUSION

In view of the above arguments, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claims 1-9 be reconsidered and withdrawn, with claims 1-17 proceeding to issue. The Examiner is invited to call the undersigned, if the Examiner believes that a telephone conversation could be helpful in expediting prosecution of the instant application.

Respectfully submitted,

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